

News from Rep. Stephanie Herseth
For Immediate Release
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HERSETH STATEMENT ON PROPOSED FSA CLOSINGS

September 21, 2005, Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth today commented on the news that the Department of Agriculture is considering closing one-fourth of the nation's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices:

“I am aware that the FSA is considering closing some of its local offices around the country but FSA officials have not yet made these plans public. While I appreciate FSA’s desire to streamline its bureaucracy, we must not let local staffing levels be slashed to the point that farmers are denied access to vital farm programs.

“Certainly, FSA has offices in certain parts of the country that have very low workloads and there are efficiencies that can be created. However, if anything, the offices that I have visited in South Dakota are overburdened as they work to provide farmers and ranchers with access to critical price support, conservation, and disaster programs.

“As a member of the House Agriculture Committee I will work to ensure that any FSA personnel moves do not hurt family producers that rely on their local offices for timely and personal access to USDA’s farm programs.

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Congresswoman Stephanie Herseth serves South Dakota in the U.S. House of Representatives. She is a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, a group of moderate Democrats committed to fiscal discipline and strong national security, and is co-chair of the Rural Working Group, which is dedicated to raising the profile of issues important to rural America. She also serves on three committees vital to South Dakota's interests: Agriculture, Veterans' Affairs and Resources.